



# Rural Partners...

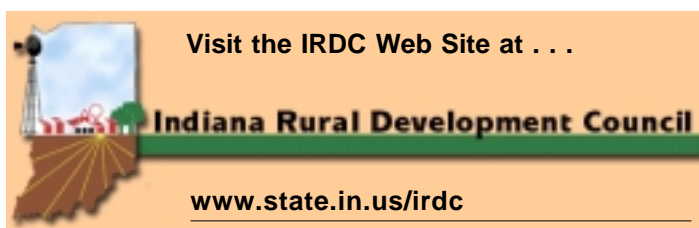
a newsletter of the Indiana Rural Development Council

Winter 2001

## IRDC Web Site Provides Helpful Information for Indiana Communities

The Indiana Rural Development Council's (IRDC) Web Site has a new look. Color graphics, icons, and special announcements highlight the latest tool in providing information about the Council's mission to serve rural communities throughout the state.

The IRDC's Marketing and Education Committee, with special staff assistance from Ryan Deweese, a lieutenant governor's intern and student at Butler University, redesigned the Web Site.



## Mission

The Indiana Rural Development Council (IRDC) is a partnership of local, state, federal, profit and not-for-profit stakeholders serving Indiana communities. The IRDC's purpose is to coordinate efforts of citizens and governments to meet the economic and social needs of rural Indiana.

## Goals

- To provide a means to address rural issues;
- To seek community input to identify problems;
- To establish partnerships to find solutions;
- To enable partners to take action; and
- To educate the public on rural issues.

"Our new site is very user friendly," says Wendy Dant, IRDC executive director. "Individuals can get updates on the work of our task forces through the updated Web Site, and they can check out the progress of the Council's other projects as well."

Dant says the Web Site now allows communities to electronically submit the required application for a meeting with the Environmental Infrastructure Working Group (EIWG). Another new feature is the addition of the Housing Funding Matrix, which can be downloaded from the site. The IRDC received a 1999 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Best Practices Award for the matrix. Contact persons for state and federal agencies are also identified on the site.

The IRDC's Leadership Development Task Force also is utilizing the new Web Site. This group identified a need for producing an inventory of leadership programs throughout Indiana and created a forum for sharing descriptions of the programs on the Web. The Web Site directory allows communities to research successful programs and projects in one location. By following a few simple instructions at the Web Site, community program representatives can insert a description of the leadership program, provide a contact person and address, and link directly to the program's Web Site.

For more information on the Web Site, call the IRDC at (317) 232-8776, or visit the site at [www.state.in.us/irdc](http://www.state.in.us/irdc).



## LOCAL SECTOR

**The Honorable William H. Graham\*** - Chair  
Mayor, City of Scottsburg  
**David Hess**  
Elkhart County Administrator  
**The Honorable Richard M. Ullrich, Jr.**  
Mayor, City of Aurora  
**Chuck Andres (a)**  
St. Leon Town Council

## STATE SECTOR

**Rob Clark**  
Indiana State Department of Health  
**Joseph E. Kernan\***  
Indiana Lieutenant Governor  
**James Segedy**  
Ball State University  
**Michaela Kendall (a)**  
Indiana Department of Commerce

## FEDERAL SECTOR

**John Thompson\***  
USDA Rural Development  
**William Shaw**  
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  
**Janice Wolfe**  
U.S. Small Business Administration  
**Robert Peacock (a)**  
USDA Farm Service Agency

## FOR PROFIT SECTOR

**Randy Haymaker\***  
Hoosier Energy Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.  
**James Rice**  
SIECO, Inc.  
**Steven Seifert**  
Bonar Group  
**Carol Lewis (a)**  
The Forest Discovery Center

## NOT-FOR-PROFIT SECTOR

**Judy Gray\***  
Orange County Economic Development Partnership  
**Roslyn Amor**  
Farm Counseling Project  
**Tom Morton**  
Indiana Association of Cities and Towns  
**David Rice (a)**  
Southern Indiana Rural Development Partnership

## LEGISLATIVE & SPECIAL APPOINTMENTS

**The Honorable Johnny Nugent (R)**, State Senator, Lawrenceburg  
**The Honorable Richard D. Young, Jr. (D)**, State Senator, Milltown  
**The Honorable William Friend (R)**, State Representative, Macy  
**The Honorable Claire Leuck (D)**, State Representative, Fowler  
**Lane A. Ralph**, Representing U.S. Senator Richard Lugar's Office  
**Phil Lehmkuhler**, Representing U.S. Senator Evan Bayh's Office  
**Luke Clippinger**, Representing U.S. Congressman Baron Hill's Office  
**Brandt Hershman**, Representing U.S. Congressman Steve Buyer's Office  
**Robert Kovach**, Representing Governor Frank O'Bannon  
**Kermit Burrous**, Past Chair

## IRDC STAFF

**Wendy Dant**, Executive Director  
**Donna Johnson**, Administrative Assistant

\*Executive Committee (a) Alternate Member

## A Message from the Executive Director

Wendy Dant

The Indiana Rural Development Council (IRDC) was formed in 1993 to provide rural communities with a forum to discuss issues and develop solutions. The result: communities across Indiana are benefiting from partnerships established by the IRDC.

Thanks to all IRDC members who have accepted the challenge to address rural issues in Indiana! Last year's efforts produced measurable successes, particularly in the areas of community visioning and infrastructure/housing assistance. This year's plan of work, outlined on the next page, will enable us to build on these accomplishments.

Best wishes for a great 2001!

Wendy Dant, Executive Director

*Wendy*

## Land Use Extension Courses Offered

The Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service and Ball State University College of Architecture and Planning provide educational workshops for plan commission members, boards of zoning appeals members,

elected officials, professional planners, planning and zoning staff, and others involved or interested in planning and zoning.

Workshops scheduled for 2001 include:

- *Rolling Up Our Sleeves: The Nitty-Gritty Work of Plan Commissions*, March 7, Danville
- *Making Zoning Work: Enforcement & Administration*, March 8, Columbus
- *Beyond the Nitty-Gritty: Hot Topics in Planning & Zoning*, March 28, Noblesville

Registration materials are available from the Extension's Web Site at [www.agecon.purdue.edu/lcd/landuseed.htm](http://www.agecon.purdue.edu/lcd/landuseed.htm).

## Join an Indiana Rural Development Council Task Force

The IRDC is putting the 2001 Work Plan into action! We're always looking for new task force members, so let us know if you are interested in serving in any of the following areas:

• *Community Visitation Program:* This program is designed to

assist rural communities in identifying issues of concern, developing potential options for addressing these issues, and following up to offer further assistance to local leaders who will implement solutions.

- *Housing Task Force:* Many rural communities and housing developers are not aware of resources available to provide affordable housing. This group aids the Indiana Housing Assistance Review Team (IHART) as they help rural communities and developers explore housing assistance options.
- *Environmental Infrastructure Working Group:* Environmental infrastructure continues to be an issue in rural economic and community development projects. The Environmental Infrastructure Working Group (EIWG) helps local communities plan for infrastructure projects (such as water and sewer) by facilitating informational meetings on the availability of financial and technical assistance.
- *Unified Plan:* In 1998, the IRDC developed the Unified Plan to guide, through collaborative efforts, Indiana's rural residents to improve their quality of life and promote successful rural communities. The plan was updated in 2000 and the IRDC continues to move forward by creating a forum of volunteers working on key issues.
- *Leadership Development Task Force:* The IRDC can help communities address leadership development issues by alerting them to resources for creating a new generation of leaders. This task force is helping identify general leadership development efforts throughout the state.

- *Land Use and Agricultural Development:* Many rural communities are becoming more aware of the impact their decisions have on overall land use plans. Lack of information and available resources for these leaders needs to be addressed. This committee works with the Indiana Land Resources Council to address land use issues in the Hoosier state.
- *Marketing & Education Committee:* While the IRDC plays a part in the successes of our partners, there continues to be a need to market the programs and assistance that we offer. Educating the public about upcoming IRDC and member events, activities and issues is an important role of this committee.
- *2002 Planning Committee:* Indiana will host the National Rural Development Partnership's Annual Leadership Conference during the summer of 2002. Through the efforts of this task force, the IRDC will take a very active role in planning this major event.

Details about IRDC task force goals are located on the Council's Web Site at [www.state.in.us/irdc](http://www.state.in.us/irdc). If you are interested in joining a task force, contact the IRDC at (317) 232-8776.

## Networking Success

**N:** Remember people's Names.

**E:** Eye contact is key.

**T:** Talk less and listen more.

**W:** Write follow-up notes on a consistent basis.

**O:** Be Open and ask Open-ended questions.

**R:** Become a Resource to others.

**K:** Knowledge is power; Know people and Know their work.

Source: Training and Development Journal, February, 1999



## IRDC Facilitates Downtown Revitalization

### Hartford City leaders and busi- ness owners gather information

On a warm August day last year in Hartford City, Mayor Joe Castello posed the question: What can rural commu-

nities do to save declining downtowns? His community, like many others in rural Indiana, once centered on a vibrant downtown that served as the focal point for commerce and entertainment. Over the years businesses moved out leaving vacant storefronts, dilapidated buildings and little hope for those establishments still struggling to keep their doors open.

While the IRDC does not have a task force focusing on downtowns, many of the Council's partners are, to some degree, involved in revitalization efforts. Therefore, the Council offered to assist the community in exploring its options.

With the help of the IRDC staff, Mayor Castello hosted the *Hartford City Downtown Revitalization Program* in October 2000. Over 40 community leaders, downtown merchants and property owners were in attendance for this half-day workshop. The IRDC was instrumental in

coordinating the agenda for the day, and facilitating the discussion between residents and service providers.

The program featured presentations from representatives of the Indiana Department of Commerce, Indiana Main Street Program, Indiana Small Business Development Corporation, Indiana Department of Natural Resources and the Indiana Department of Transportation.

The agenda featured Brent Martin, a business owner in the nearby City of Plymouth, who showcased the long-term improvements in his community's downtown. Plymouth also suffered from a shifting of businesses toward the highway east of town, but after almost 12 years of revitalization efforts, this community again has a vibrant downtown.

Following the presentations, the community provided lunch for the group and the presenters were available for informal discussions. By the end of the session, new partnerships were formed to organize the revitalization efforts.

Mayor Castello followed up with a letter thanking the IRDC: "Through your efforts, local participants left the meeting knowing there is some hope for revitalizing our downtown area," he wrote. "The comment sheets we received indicate several areas of improvement the city and business owners need to pursue. We realize it can't happen overnight, but we now have an understanding of where to start."

## Northwest RC&D Area Established

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) recently announced the selection of the Northwest Territory Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Area as one of the 33 newly designated RC&D Areas.

The Northwest Territory RC&D counties include Lake, Porter and St. Joseph in Northwest Indiana. Indiana now has eight RC&Ds in the state covering 62 of the 92 counties.

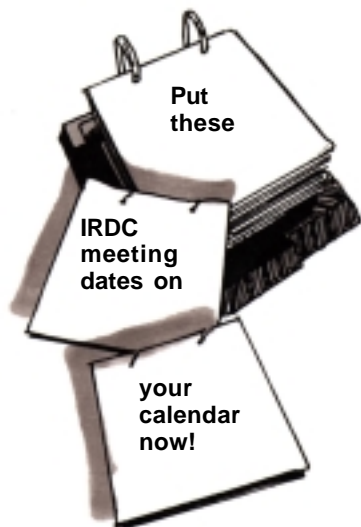
USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides each RC&D Area with a local coordinator to help citizens access USDA programs and services. Other USDA agencies also provide assistance.

"The Northwest Territory RC&D will enhance conservation of natural resources in Indiana," said NRCS State Conservationist Jane Hardisty. "We look forward to working with the local folks on the key resource issues in the Northwest area."

Since January 1999, the Northwest Territory RC&D has built on the success of the existing RC&D Areas in Indiana by creating a steering committee that includes local public officials, representation from the other RC&D Areas, and the general public to set measurable goals and objectives. The Northwest Territory RC&D will provide leadership in the areas of conservation, sustainable development, and the most efficient use of the land and natural resources of the area. It will also address air and water quality concerns in the Lake Michigan and Kankakee River watershed regions.



## IRDC Meeting Dates for 2001



The Indiana Rural Development Council's Governing Board has set its meeting schedule for 2001. The meetings are open and all interested parties are invited to attend!

Date	Meeting	Location
April 12	Governing Board	Suite 414, ISTA Building 150 W. Market St., Indpls.
June 7	Governing Board	Suite 414, ISTA Building 150 W. Market St., Indpls.
August 2	Governing Board	Suite 414, ISTA Building 150 W. Market St., Indpls.
October 4	Governing Board	Suite 414, ISTA Building 150 W. Market St., Indpls.
November 15-16	Annual Conference	Lebanon Holiday Inn I-65 North, Exit 38
December 6	Governing Board	Suite 414, ISTA Building 150 W. Market St., Indpls.

All IRDC Governing Board meetings will begin at 10:00 a.m. unless otherwise noted.

## Matching Rural Communities With New Cultures

### Workshops help communities meet the needs of new residents

Rural Indiana communities are quickly becoming adopted homes for many immigrants moving into the state.

The question is, how do

you merge new cultures into these communities in such a way that it benefits all citizens?

Two workshops offered by the IRDC and the Indiana Association of Cities and Towns (IACT) last fall addressed this important topic. Speakers discussed issues designed to help local officials successfully integrate new residents into their communities. Over 80 community leaders, service organizations and agency representatives participated in the discussions.

"We're looking at a changing economy and changing cultures in rural Indiana," said Tom Morton, IACT deputy director and IRDC Governing Board member. "If we can provide community representatives with good tools to promote workforce development, it becomes a win-win situation for rural Indiana and its new residents."

Recently released U.S. Census Bureau information shows Indiana has seen increases in ethnic populations over the last 10 years. From 1990 to 2000, populations have increased in Indiana among Hispanics, 55.8%, and Pacific Islanders, 54%.

Workshops were offered in Logansport and Jasper. The highlight of each session was a panel discussion by local officials. The northern workshop featured Logansport Mayor Richard Hettinger. At the southern workshop, Mayor Gail Kemp spoke about programs the City of Huntingburg has implemented to meet the needs of its new residents. If you would like more information on this topic, contact Wendy Dant, IRDC executive director, at (317) 232-8776.



## Community Development Workshops

The Community Development Division of the Indiana Department of Commerce (IDOC) has set dates for upcoming workshops.

These evening meetings offer city, town and

county officials the opportunity to learn about the programs offered through this division, as well as a brief introduction to the Indiana Rural Development Council. All meeting times are 6 to 8 p.m. (local time). Call the IDOC Community Development Division at (317) 232-8911 for more information.

Mark your calendars for the meeting nearest you.

- February 21 Charlestown City Hall
- February 28 Princeton City Hall
- March 8 Crawfordsville Community Center
- March 14 Middletown Town Hall
- May 2 Bluffton City Hall
- May 9 Monticello Senior Citizens Building

## Main Street Comes Through Indianapolis

Through the efforts of the Indiana Main Street Program staff, the National Town Meeting on Main Street will be held in Indianapolis April 1-4, 2001. The conference will attract about 2,000 people from across the

country who specialize in downtown economic revitalization and historic preservation. "We're excited about this opportunity to showcase the work of our Indiana Main Street communities," said Jayne Stites, director of the Indiana Main Street Program.

Topics for the conference include combating urban sprawl, technology, economic restructuring, and promotion, design and organization of downtown areas.

Volunteer opportunities are available to Main Street member communities. Each program donating at least eight hours of volunteer time will earn a complimentary registration to the conference. For more information, contact Jennifer Guimont, education and communications specialist, Main Street office, at (317) 233-0410.



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### *IRDC Rural Partners*

**The deadline for the spring issue is Thursday, March 29.**

Submit articles to the IRDC at the address above or e-mail to Wendy Dant at [wdant@commerce.state.in.us](mailto:wdant@commerce.state.in.us).